

Free Christian Commonwealth

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The new position of conservative men in the Border States and Northern Churches, and their corresponding duties.

The division which the new-born zeal for ecclesiastical authority has forced upon the Churches in Kentucky and Missouri puts a somewhat different face upon the controversy between the friends of Christian freedom and the advocates of arbitrary ecclesiastical power. It may be important just now to consider carefully what points have been settled by this division, and what duties it devolves upon the friends of the truth everywhere.

It is now very manifest that the reasons which Radicalism has heretofore been assigning in justification of its arbitrary and high-handed decrees, dissolving Presbyteries *ipso facto*, and citing gangs of men to its bar for trial by the gang, are not the real but only pretended reasons.

That the dissolution of these Presbyteries has not been—as at first pretended in the Assembly—in consequence of the horror of pious Radicalism at Wilson and Robinson as the chief of sinners, is manifest enough from the indictment of the sentence by the Assembly's faithful hangmen in Transylvania Presbytery upon Messrs. Barnes and Saunders—men void of offence perhaps beyond all other men of our Synod.

Nor was the force vituperative spirit of the Declaration and Testimony the cause of dissolving; since the singularly moderate and good-tended protest of the Lexington address seems to have excited just as much wrath among the Assembly's adherents, and to have been made just as much a ground of dissolution as the Declaration and Testimony.

Nor was the real cause of the dissolution the signing of that paper; as is manifest from the fact that West Lexington and other Presbyteries were dissolved though no signers of the declaration were present in them.

Nor has the division resulted from our reckless purpose to divide the Churches, as charged upon the witnesses for the truth; as is manifest from the rejection of all our overtures for peace by the Assembly's adherents in Louisville Presbytery; and still more manifest from the course of the adherents of the Assembly in the Synod of Missouri, when their opponents desired to postpone division by adjournment for a whole year.

And that there was some other motive for pressing this division in the two Synods than simple obedience to the order of Assembly, is manifest enough from the fact that the order of the Assembly did not require the *ipso facto* dissolution of the Synods. Nor, as we have the best reason for believing, did Dr. Gurley, the author of the Assembly's decree, himself understand it to operate the *ipso facto* dissolution of the Synods, but the contrary. The dissolution of the Synods was, therefore, in excess of the Assembly's order.

What then was the real motive and purpose of the Assembly's adherents in the Border States, in pressing so recklessly the execution of the Assembly's order—even beyond the requirements of the Assembly itself? We answer, very manifestly, the same purpose and motive which has actuated the leaders of the Assembly in their orders of 1895 and 1896, and in the whole of their hostility to the signers of the Declaration and Testimony, viz: The purpose to get out of their way every man who will not concur with them in their design to make the Presbyterian Church the handmaid of a certain Puritanic political party, now in the ascendancy in the country. The man who will quietly acquiesce in this semi-cristianism, and accept Thaddeus Stevens and Sumner as his political apostles, may sign as many Declarations, Testimonies and protests as he pleases without offence. The man who will not must be anathematized and ostracized, even though his testimony be as mellifluous as the Lexington address, and his reputation for the moderation and amiableness of his spirit be that of Messrs. Barnes and Saunders. Mr. Breck to-day is just as thoroughly hated, and is maligned with just as much gusto, as Mr. Robinson; Dr. VanDyke as Dr. Wilson; Dr. Boardman even more than Dr. Brooks.

It is something gained to the cause of truth to have thus cleared away the false issues and exposed the shallow pretences of the adherents of the Assembly. It is a still larger gain to have reached the point where worthy discussion and ecclesiastical struggles for numbers must change into vigorous action for the support and propagation of the great truth now already seen to be involved in this controversy. And if the friends of truth will now cast away from them all side issues, and devote themselves assiduously to the work of maintaining the principles for which they contend by a vigorous support of those who teach these principles against the avowed purpose of the

Assembly men to crush them out by means of the power and money of the Board, it will not be long before they will see the triumph of their testimony.

The Synod of Kentucky by its prompt and vigorous movement for organizing a Committee of Missions with \$20,000 at its command for missionary and sustentation purposes, has shown a full appreciation of the new position. If the Synod of Missouri shall succeed in giving an equal degree of efficiency to its Committee of Missions, organized a year ago, there need no longer be any fear among the hard working Missionaries who concur in our testimony of being driven out of the field; nor any temptation to the idle congregations to accept the seductive bribes offered by the emissaries of the Philadelphia Board. With \$40,000 at the command of the two Synods—more than half the amount raised for the Philadelphia Board last year—we should be able not only "to strengthen our stakes," but "to lengthen our cords" also.

In the suffering districts of the Southern States, there are ministers and congregations holding "the like precious faith with us," whom we ought to assist in their distress. In the States North of us, where the policy of the Protestant Church Courts has driven nearly one half the people out of connection with Protestantism into either Popery or infidelity—there are many communities where missionaries from the Synods of Kentucky and Missouri could get the ear of the people and save many of them yet to the cause of Protestantism. And we doubt not that, with proper effort among the people, an adequate support could be obtained in many such neighborhoods for ministers known to be the preachers of a non-political gospel.

The appeal has come to us from many quarters in the North—"What shall we do? You in the Border States have ecclesiastical organizations and can go forward; but we are scattered bodies of people, with few ministers to lead us—and the ecclesiastical organizations against us." We take the liberty of answering—though only on our own personal responsibility—"You can do much if you have but the faith and courage to go forward. Organize yourselves for public worship—let the world around you see that there are still Presbyterians who stand fast by our ancient principles of Christ's Crown and Covenant—obtain the services of some minister who sympathizes with your views to labor among you. If you need assistance, apply to your friends in the Border States. Do not stand on questions of ecclesiastical etiquette, while you see whole communities around you driven away from the Protestant churches, because they will not act with a particular political party. A half dozen earnest Christian men and women in any such position, can make themselves more efficient as witnesses for the truth, and more terrible to its adversaries, than any half dozen Doctors of Divinity with their ponderous ecclesiastical disquisitions. Get men around you engaged, with their families, in the worship of Jesus, the King in Zion, and leave the question of ecclesiastical relations and forms to be settled when you get farther on, and when the Lord shall restore his church from her apostasy. Ecclesiastical relations and forms of government are very important; but the gospel preached to perishing sinners around you, is still more important. Ecclesiastical disorder is an evil—but allowing whole families and neighborhoods to be driven off from the gospel, is still a greater evil.

We cannot express too strongly the conviction that the time has now come for testimony by action. Let the adversaries go on and malign, defame, threaten as they will—not for the truth. See that your portion of the funds useful for the support of our cause is raised immediately. See that whenever a missionary is suffering, his wants are supplied. See that whenever a missionary is wanted, steps be taken to procure one. Waste no more time in vain efforts to win over the timid and undecided to stand with you. For you may count pretty certainly that those who have not been convinced by all that has occurred in Assembly, Presbytery and Synod, "will not be persuaded though one rose from the dead." It is not want of light but want of heart, and all compromises to win them, are but so much loss to your testimony for the truth. If our friends are but true to themselves and our cause, we see every thing to encourage us.

A Somewhat Dogmatical Answer.
The Presbyterian of October 27, states a question from a Baltimore correspondent, with the editor's answer as follows:
"Answer—A correspondent in Baltimore asks the following questions: 'Can persons who have been ordained, but without congregational charge, be members of Presbyteries? Can they sit and vote? Can they, or ought they, to be competent to represent a Presbytery in the General Assembly?'"

We answer in the affirmative to all these questions. The Secretaries of the Boards of the Church are without congregational charge; so are editors of religious newspapers; but they sit and vote in the Presbyteries, and they are competent to represent the Presbyteries in which they belong in the General Assembly.

This answer must, we presume, satisfy the Baltimore correspondent, unless he chooses to risk his reputation for "loyalty." But the Presbyterian will probably find out before we get much further on, that there are great principles involved in these questions which he does not seem to perceive.

It must soon become a question of very grave discussion in the Presbyterian Church, whether a class of ministers unknown to our constitution shall have a controlling voice in administering the constitution.

We do not dispute that men directly engaged in the church's work should sit in her courts—especially when called to that work by the church herself. But even the precedents cited by the editor as so conclusive, by no means prove that mere "dead-heads" in the ministry—representing nobody, no work, no interest—that have no other function than to vote whenever the exigencies of little spiritual nabobs demand it—should be recognized in our church courts.

The Preaching for the Times.

We were somewhat startled on opening the October number of the Repository at finding ourselves in the midst of a dashing article on preaching, altogether in contrast with the ordinary quiet tone of that quarterly. Indeed we were reminded by its trenchant thrusts at the prevailing style of preaching of the brochure of our friend Ruffier some fourteen years ago entitled "Charity and the Chrysalis." Evidently "Young America" is beginning to make himself heard in Princeton as well as in the General Assembly.

After describing the characteristic features of the times—the activity of the scientific spirit—the rage for novelty among the masses and the prevalence of the utilitarian spirit—the writer proceeds to describe three corresponding methods of preaching which have become current:—1. The Gospel of Philosophy and Ethics to meet the culture of the age. 2. The Gospel of clap-trap and twaddle. 3. The Gospel according to Xantippe—the Gospel of "vinegar and wormwood"—the practically scolding gospel.

Seeing that neither "the Gospel of Ethics, the Gospel of clap-trap, nor the Gospel of petty scolding are any longer the popular things they once were in certain quarters"—the writer proceeds to suggest a broader working scheme which shall take into account all these forces at once. To the question what is the preaching which shall meet these determined conditions of the case, the writer answers in general: "God's truth in its practical bearings must be presented with proper artistic form and with power, with the grand end of elevating and saving men." And under this general answer proceeds to several specifications: as 1. The necessity of a more correct, complete and consistent theory of rhetoric, under which head he dissects the various defective theories and no-theories of rhetoric. 2. Of presenting God's truth—both in matter and form—in its practical bearing, with freshness and vividness. 3. Of presenting the specific truths of God's word rather than Theological abstractions. Under which general subject he considers the question of the power of Beecher and Spurgeon as preachers, &c.

We are not sorry to find some one stirring this subject in the Repository. Suggestions of this sort from any other quarter would be regarded as the mere callibans of ultraism by the great body of the Princeton made preachers, who specially revere these hints.

We feel constrained to say, however, that, whether it be from the defect of our old-fashioned conservatism or from the overstrained views of this dashing Rhetorician, we cannot accept several of the propositions that enter into his view of the rationale of preaching, while we fully concur in his views of the failure of the methods heretofore popular to bring the gospel before the masses and fasten their attention upon it, our judgment is that the failure arises in large part from the false theories of preaching under which young preachers are trained, rather than from any change in the spirit of the times; and that the very supposition of this writer that the gospel can be accommodated to the spirit of the times, argues that he has not yet himself gotten to the bottom of the difficulty which he proposes to remedy.

Preaching, as we understand it, may imply eloquent speech, and learned exposition of a book, and effort to elevate and save souls. But these are not all of it, nor the essential elements of it. To preach the Word in our times, or in any times, is to take the Word as spoken "at sundry times and in divers manners" by Jesus the Prophet of the Church and translate it into the forms of thought and speech current in these times. The preacher stands before men to speak by authority, in the name of Christ. And so far from seeking to flatter the wrong passions of the times, he is to endeavor to impress the men of the times with the notion that he speaks by authority and "not as the scribes" of the platform and the lecture-room. The book that he expounds, moreover is not of a Cicero or

Socrates who spoke words of wisdom, but of a Jesus who speaks in this Word to the souls of men here and now.

It must be borne in mind that Paul and the other first preachers of our gospel, troubled themselves very little about conforming to the advanced thought of their times. Nay they expressly declared that, of set purpose they would not gratify the taste of the times. Earnest as they were for the salvation of their 'kindred according to the flesh' and of the Gentiles, still they could not conform the gospel to their tastes. Though "to the Jews stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness," still they must preach Christ crucified, and nothing else.

We are sorry to find this writer, after so clearly setting forth the theory of the three divine ordinances of the family, the Church and the State, falling in with the current hue and cry against the ultraism of preachers who refuse to use their position as a means for inculcating a political policy on the people; and resting content with the foggy-headed platitudes of the American Erastianism, concerning the obligation to extend the sphere of the preacher into the domain of civil affairs; for he seems to speak approvingly even of Beecher's political deliverances from the pulpit. When will men learn the simple truth, that as God has ordained the State, and has commissioned the Magistrate, so He has given to the State and the Magistrate a rule of faith and action, separate and apart from the revealed rule of faith, which He has given to His Church. And that this great rule of faith to the nation is binding alike upon all nations Christian, Mohammedan or Pagan, without distinction; and He has no more committed the interpretation of this rule to the ministers of His gospel than He has committed to them the power of the sword? That even without the light of the gospel revelation, men are perfectly capable of interpreting and applying the rule of natural law which God has given to the nation.

Such writers as this in the Repository are the men of all others to know that, as matter of fact, men without the gospel have expounded and applied the law of God to civil society fully as well as those who have the gospel. The "Offices of Cicero," or his letter to his brother on the duties of a Governor of a province, if carefully studied, might well cause both the ecclesiastical and jurists who have ruled over our country for six years past, to blush for their maladministration. The heathen Cicero's Offices to-day is a better exposition of the duties of a man in civil society, than the "Offices of Cicero" and the enactments of so-called Statesmen in the United States on the same subject for five years past. And yet men will insist on preaching Socrates as well as Christ, Cicero as well as Paul—"Plato as well as John, under the fallacious plea that the gospel must take cognizance of all wrong doing."

This subject of preaching for the times seems to be attracting attention in Britain as well as in America. We notice in the North British Review for September, an elaborate article on the English pulpit historically considered; at the close of which the writer presents his views also of the changes which the times call for in the pulpit.

We are painfully impressed from this article as well as from numerous other unmistakable signs that bad as is the notion of preaching in our own church in the United States, it is yet greatly above the Free Church of Scotland, which we are accustomed to regard as the most liberal and orthodox of the British churches. The conception of "preaching the word" as a Divinely appointed office for calling sinners and edifying saints; of speaking the message simply as God's message to men, though it seem the "foolishness," preaching seems to be rapidly dropping out of the consciousness of the Churches of Scotland. Preaching seems to be treated as a profession, an art, a bidding for the popular favor. This writer advocates the English style of preaching class, as distinct from a class of ministers, after the fashion of the middle ages. He favors the English plan of preaching borrowed sermons; as better than any that a busy pastor can prepare. He sneers at the preaching which seeks to "edify." In short he seems utterly oblivious of the gospel theory of preaching as speaking for God to men.

The Old Story—"If the next Assembly does not do this!"
We had supposed that after forcing the ploughshare through the Kentucky churches, and proceeding as volunteer hangmen for the General Assembly, we would at last, after six years of "wait! wait, see what the Assembly will do—we are as much averse to the Assembly's unconstitutional and outrageous acts as any of you; if they are not taken back, then" &c.—would now be treated to a new song. But to our amazement we hear of ecclesiastical brethren who, to keep the consciences of conservative people quiet, are still assuring them, that resistance shall yet be made to the General Assembly—and all in Kentucky will yet stand together. King James called Presbyterians "the Lord's silly sheep." And we shall certainly feel constrained

to accept the royal definition, if this last and most preposterous of insults to the intelligence of Presbyterian people shall be quietly pocketed.

What matters it now as to future action of the Assembly? How can that affect the question of the relations between the executioners and the executed in Kentucky? How can that heal the sense of outrage, meanness and treachery? How can that restore the ecclesiastically assassinated from the dead? How can that restore confidence and harmony between the injurers and the injured?

A Reliable Correspondent.

The Presbyterian's letter writer, on the subject of the division of the Missouri Synod, mentions among other grounds of hope entertained by his radical friends, the following:

"It was known that Drs. Robinson and Wilson, had written, signifying their purpose to go with the Southern Assembly; a few of the Declaration party in Missouri were of like mind; but the majority of them were opposed to any such movement."

How it was known that Drs. Robinson and Wilson had written, signifying their purpose to go with the Southern Assembly, is a mystery to these gentlemen—and particularly to Dr. Wilson, who had every reason to suppose it was known very generally that he had no such purpose, having with his church declared the contrary officially and formally.

The Radical logicians and historians have a wonderful way of having "it known" imperceptibly, just as the convenience of the argument for the time being requires. Hence, the preposterous history-making which precedes most of their arguments. Let them make a premise of fact to suit and they can make a show of argument.

The Boy-Moderator and the Venerable Stated Clerk.

The Presbyterian's reliable correspondent at Lexington Ky., furnishes that journal with an inside view of the proceedings of Synod at Henderson, in which occurs the following sentence:

"After prayer the venerable Stated Clerk, the Rev. S. McRoberts, who had been just twenty-five years in the office, began to call the roll, commencing with the Presbytery of Louisville. The men on the roll then elected a Stated Clerk, the Rev. F. G. Strahan, and a boy Moderator, the Rev. H. Douglass; and a Temporary Clerk, the Rev. Robert Morrison, a signer of the Declaration and Testimony, and adjourned."

This writer seems to forget, as does his bogus Synod also in re-instating Mr. McRoberts, that they are setting at defiance the judgment of the General Assembly; or at least what will be its judgment when the report of its committee on the records of the Synod of Kentucky shall come to be acted upon by the next Assembly, to which this report was referred for want of time. Does not this writer know that the committee on our records in the last Assembly, reported to that body in substance that our minutes had been disgracefully kept, and that the Synod of Kentucky be advised to look for a clerk more capable? So that in displacing the "venerable Stated Clerk" the Synod but acted in accordance with the hint of the Assembly's committee!

Concerning this "boy Moderator," considering that he has been pastor of one of our important churches for some seven years past, we imagine that Mr. Douglass must be of age at least. And considering the reputation that he has made for himself among his brethren as a man of thinking power of no mean order, of wisdom, prudence and great moderation, it is no wonder that he should have been selected at such a time to preside over the Synod, nor surprising that he discharged his duties to the satisfaction of all.

It had not occurred to us, until suggested by the remarks of this writer, how strikingly the great ideas of the two Presbyterians presented in the two Synods of Kentucky are typified in the men under which each Synod was organized, and is now officered. To the popular ear in Kentucky how readily do the names of Breck, Douglass, Strahan, Morrison, suggest the notion of the calm, dignified and courteous, yet manly, candid, and courageous style of religion heretofore so characteristic of our people. While on the other hand the names of McKee, Lapsley, Allen, and McRoberts are daily becoming more and more suggestive of the canting, crafty, common-place, strategic ecclesiasticalism which the new order of things is seeking to introduce among us.

Especially does it seem to us in accordance with the eternal fitness of things that such a Synod should have just such a Moderator as Mr. Lapsley, and just such clerks as Mr. Allen and Mr. McRoberts, neither of the three doing the proper work of the ministry. Besides, Mr. Douglass is a laborious and successful pastor, while Mr. Lapsley we believe a store keeper in a small way. It is difficult to conceive where else could have been found that marvellous combination of the maximum of unconscious effrontery, and conscious cunning, with the minimum of brains, conscience, and delicacy of feeling which so truly typifies the nature of the work which this Synod is set up to accomplish in Kentucky. We are content to be represented by the "boy-Moderator."

Ground of the Action of 1837.

The very able correspondent of the Presbyterian who signs himself a "Minority Man," and who is evidently posted touching the Old and New School controversy, gives the following account of the grounds of the action of 1837, by way of exposing the fallacies of those who cite the men of '37 in support of the acts of 1865-6:

As a counterpoise to the authorities adduced in support of the true theory of our system, our consolidation brethren point to certain of the acts of the Assembly of 1837. On these alleged precedents the following observations are submitted.

The formal deliberate exposition of the Constitution on the part of the General Assembly, and of all who adhered to it, cannot be invalidated by the subsequent acts of the body. Different Assemblies reaffirmed the doctrine, including that of 1837, that the powers entrusted to our supreme judicatory are delegated, specific, and limited; and that it has no warrant to assume at will the rights and functions of the inferior courts. If this doctrine was sometimes contravened in the course of the New School controversy, an explanation may be found in the circumstances of the times. The good men who shaped the policy of the Church in those days were neither better nor worse than good men usually are in kindred circumstances. When they were in a minority, as in the Assemblies of '34 and '35, they insisted upon the literal and established interpretation of the Constitution. There being no temptation to adopt any other view, they held that "the power of the whole is not over every part, but over the power of every part." When they were in a majority, as in '36 and '37, while still affirming in express terms (*Vide Nos. I. and II. of this series*) the true theory of our system, they found a supposed warrant for the high prerogative doctrine in the clauses of the Constitution conferring upon the General Assembly a "superintendence over the concerns of the whole church," and "the power of suppressing schismatical contentions and dissensions." They did indeed argue that the vigorous measures of '37 were incompatible with their well known doctrines of constitutional law. But there were two other grounds upon which they rested the validity of those measures, and which future historians will be likely to regard as sounder than the chief, if not their exclusive justification. The first was the admitted unconstitutionality of the Plan of Union, in virtue of which on its abrogation, the Synods built upon it fell with it. This principle was recognized and affirmed by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. The other ground was the necessity of the case. This feeling more or less disclosed, pervades the entire proceedings of the Old School party. A crisis was upon them. The exigencies of the church demanded extreme measures. If they failed now to secure a permanent ascendancy in its councils, the following opportunity would be lost, and another year might see the church pass finally into the hands of a party hostile to its faith and order, and alien from all its traditions. "There are difficulties connected with the plan," said Dr. J. B. McRoberts, in the debate upon citing inferior judicatories, "but the best course is the shortest one. You should go right onward and directly to the cure of the present evils. The church is tired of controversy, and longs for peace. We maintain the standards and the power we now have to preserve them. We may never have again. Two years ago the orthodox had the majority, and if they had properly used it, not only would much subsequent contention have been avoided, but the church would have approved your course. Now is our time. We must reform, or be dissolved. To live together is impossible. We should, therefore, say to the opposing party, 'Gentlemen, there is the door, the highway is yours.' And if they will not go, we should kindly, but firmly help them out."

This was the prevalent feeling. It indicates a period of mighty conflict and of revolution. I do not impugn either the motives or the measures of the spirit that reigned then. That it was guided by a lofty conscientiousness, an ardent love for the church, and a profound sense of obligation to its Divine Head, is sufficiently apparent from the eminent names which grace the records of that Assembly.

Demoralization of the Religious Tastes of our Children.

We doubt not a good many excellent people will be disposed to regard our remarks of last week on the Sunday School Convention—the American Sunday School Union and its books, as but another ebullition of our ultraism.—Having since that writing received the October number of the Princeton Repository, edited by Dr. Hodge, we were struck with the following utterances on the same subject, which we found on the 5th page of the new number. To any of our friends who may have supposed that our views on the subject of popular instruction in the church, and popular reading are peculiar to ourselves, we commend the following extract:

"Public lectures and amusements have moved in the same direction, until in their downward reach there is scarcely anything, however offensive to sound sense, cultivated taste, correct morals, and right religious feeling, that fails to find a place to exhibit itself and an audience to witness the exhibition, provided only that it be novel. Nor has this tendency left the religion of the day untouched and unimpaired. No thinking man has failed to mark its presence in the work of the Sabbath School; in changing the character of the instruction, until we hear too little of the solid portions of the Scripture, while pointless stories are often substituted for God's truth; in transforming the addresses, until, in some regions, one who is not equal to Gough as a mimic, to Bonifas as a rope walker, and to Punch as a comedian is hardly thought of as fit to speak to an audience of children; in metamorphosing the Library, until in many cases there is little left to be read but rapid, so called religious novels, which, in spite of all their pretensions and of all the piling of the religious press, are, in fact, in their own essential nature, at war with common sense, morality, and religion, and in their necessary influence, irretrievably bad. The same spirit has not hesitated to invade and desecrate even the pulpit with its unseemly ways. Tradition tells us that, at a certain stage in their progress, Dr. Archibald Alexander used to address his classes in Princeton Theological Seminary on the subject of popularity as preachers, somewhat on this wise:—

"Young gentlemen, you can be popular as preachers. It's the easiest thing in the world. It does not require any genius, or common sense, or study, or culture. Secure access to the columns of the newspaper and advertise that on Sunday, at the usual hours of service, you will preach standing on your head, and your house will be crowded. It's easy to be popular in that way, if you want to be." In our day we could bring from the Saturday dailies of many a city, advertisements, in which clergymen propose, in all soberness, to perform, for the public entertainment, feats quite as absurd as that suggested by the great educator of ministers. It would need no prophet to predict the results of all this, even were they yet in the far future; and since they are here in the present, it takes no secret to discern what they are. This is not the place to demonstrate what must be the logical result of reading novels only, and only poor ones at that. The man who thinks and reasons for himself knows what it must be. We are coming, in fact, upon a public with one of its great elements having no mental muscle with which to lay hold of truth, caring nothing for our standard English literature, taking no interest in theology or the truth of God, and going to church, if at all, to be entertained rather than instructed. We are training up a generation by the reading of books filled with pretended facts which are yet contrary to the nature of things, of men, and of God, with a morality not of God, a religion not of Christ and a spirit infused of Mammon and Fashion, rather than the Holy Ghost; and, in so training them, we are destroying all taste for that which is true and Christ-like, and almost barring the possibility of their becoming the powerful thinkers, and the earnest practical workers which the exigencies of the church demand for its mission. The day may not have come yet when the people of God are ready to enter their solemn protest, and sweep all such trash out of church, Sabbath-school, and family, but it must come sooner or later, for God's government is so ordered that it never suffers a foolish, a base, or an evil thing to perpetuate its existence in his church forever."

Rev. W. M. Ferguson and his Presbytery.
We find the following in the Missouri Presbyterian of October 26:

In pursuance of the call, a special meeting of the Presbytery of Zanesville was held in the First Presbyterian Church, Zanesville, Ohio, on Tuesday. The signers of the call for this meeting were Revs. John Kelly, Henry Fulton, and W. Morris Grimes, and Elders Burlingame, of Zanesville, and Hamilton, of Brownsville. These worthies with the saintly Sam. Galloway and the pious Rev. J. M. Platt as instigators, were actuated by a peculiar Christian charity of bringing about a Presbyterian trial and conviction of their brother in the Church, Rev. W. M. Ferguson, for writing letters from St. Louis to the Ohio *Schenckman*, during the late session of the General Assembly, in which the eminent Christian virtue (*17*) of that infallible, immaculate body was properly recognized and sufficiently appreciated! Well, the Presbytery of Zanesville met on their call, and acted for their developments. But they shrank from making the direct assault of themselves, and proposed to Presbytery to appoint a committee of some kind, into whose hands they would put their prepared baiting, and thus avoid the responsibility of its paterfamilias. This, however, Presbytery did not see fit to grant. The expedient of a committee failing them, and being fairly cornered, after a recess of two hours, allowed them for consultation, one of them finally hauled out of his capacious pocket a paper on which were written, at great length and with much circumlocution, charges and specifications against Brother Ferguson, for his reported disrespect of clerical and lay Radicalism as manifested in the General Assembly by the contorted Galloway and a number of diatened D. D.'s. The dried ink and faded appearance of the formidable document indicated an antecedence of at least several weeks; the facts it had been prepared weeks before, secretly, by Platt and Kelly. One of them moved that the precious production be received and adopted by Presbytery.

But Presbytery did not like the looks of the thing, and disposed of it by adopting a paper disapproving of the spirit that evidently actuated Mr. Ferguson's malignant persecutions in bringing up this case—also implying that Mr. Ferguson acted imprudently in writing about Sam Galloway, however truthful his statements were. So ended this huge tempest in a teapot. The whole thing was conceived and brought forth in political animosity, and has resulted in giving Mr. Ferguson a notoriety that his enemies might envy. Thou art anxious to see and hear him, who would never have thought of it, had not the hate of party spirit given him prominence. That the act of the Assembly was most judiciously unjust was the almost unanimous opinion of this large and truly conservative Christian body of men. This meeting was quite full, thirty members being present, and all but three voted to sustain Mr. Ferguson, and expressed profound regret—(many indignation)—at the bitter and wickedly malignant course pursued against him by the majority in the Assembly, and by Messrs. Platt, Kelly, &c.—in the Presbytery. The bad spirit in which these gentlemen have acted has lowered them much in the opinion of the good people of this entire community, and rendered the two named, obnoxious to charges for sinning grossly against Mr. Ferguson with that "unruly member, set on fire of hell" and so "full of deadly poison."

We render Mr. P.'s our warmest wishes in thus being so happily delivered from the foils of satirical malignity, and would wish his detractors of the sad end of Haman, the Agagite, and of Judas Iscariot.

In conclusion, we would suggest the propriety of their reading Paul's advice in Gal., vi. 1-10.

The greatest commercial city of the world, London, sends out no mail and has no postal delivery on Sunday.

Free Christian Commonwealth

Synod of Missouri.

We had hoped that some of our friends in Missouri would have favored us with a report of the doings of the Synod, for our columns; but as we have not been so favored, we publish an abstract of the proceedings as found in the *Missouri Presbyterian*—also so much of the report of the Committee on the Minutes of the General Assembly as refers to the ecclesiastical matters so engaging the minds of the people:

"Immediately after the opening sermon, the Moderator constituted the Synod with prayer, and all the members present were enrolled.

Rev. Mr. Nicolls moved that the names of the signers of the *Declaration and Testimony* be stricken from the roll. The motion was seconded.

Dr. Brooks moved that the Synod adjourn until next October. This motion was voted upon and carried.

Just here, we make two remarks—

(1.) An earnest desire was expressed on both sides of the house that, if possible, the Synod might be saved from division.

In accordance with this desire, it was understood beforehand that the foregoing resolutions should be offered.

(2.) After the announcement of the vote upon the motion to adjourn, the Moderator did not pronounce the body adjourned, for the reason that members, on both sides, seemed to desire a free interchange of views, so as fully to understand what either party wished and intended to do, provided it were definitely agreed to transact no business, but to adjourn until next year.

Therefore, a protracted interlocutory was held, continuing through Wednesday evening, Thursday and part of Friday.

During this informal conference, it appeared that some of the Assembly men were endeavoring to prevent the immediate dismemberment of the Synod, in the hope, as it struck us, that by delaying until the meeting of the next Assembly, or until next fall, their party could not lose anything, but might gain very much.

Whatever the motive which prompted them to counsel delay, the *Declaration and Testimony* men and their friends evinced a willingness to adjourn at once, without transacting any business. When, however, certain brethren—Finley, Steed, Miller, &c.—plainly and repeatedly stated that, in their opinion, the Synod was already dissolved, inasmuch as signers of the *Declaration and Testimony* had been enrolled—that they could not vote, for they did not recognize us as a Synod, and frankly declared that sooner or later they would organize a new Synod, as directed by the Assembly, it was very evident to the majority that no good, but, very likely, much greater harm would result, by waiting another year. They would not, as they could not, consent to tie their own hands, while brethren on the other side were unwilling to bind themselves to remain quiet also.

The spirit of the majority of the Synod may be gathered from the fact that the following paper was offered by a signer of the *Declaration and Testimony*, as a substitute for Dr. Montgomery's resolution, and was voted down:

Resolved, (1) That, in the judgment of this Synod, the Synod of Missouri is not dissolved under the order of the Assembly.

Resolved, (2) That in postponing the transaction of business until next October, the Synod sincerely purposes and earnestly hopes, by this measure, to avert the evils of division.

This was offered, it must be remembered, when nothing had been done beyond enrolling the members who were present, and when it was proposed to adjourn without attending to any business. As we have just said, this paper was lost, and Dr. Montgomery's, which breathes much more of subordination to the General Assembly, was almost unanimously adopted, viz:

Resolved, As the sense of this Synod, that, in the action had last night, the Synod of Missouri did not violate, nor design to violate, the injunctions of the Assembly, but simply to hold the whole subject in abeyance until after the next General Assembly.

In a word, then, we all felt that the division must take place. We went back to the beginning. A change of votes on the motion to adjourn, was allowed, and that motion was declared to be lost. Then, Mr. Nicolls renewed his motion to direct the Clerk to strike from the roll the names of the signers of the *Declaration and Testimony*.

Ruling Elder D. H. Bishop, who is not a signer of the *Declaration and Testimony*, offered the following as a substitute for the resolution of Mr. Nicolls.

INASMUCH as private judgment is both a right and a duty—a right which no man can surrender and remain a Protestant, and a duty which cannot be neglected without sin;

INASMUCH as the standards (the fundamental law) of the church are authoritative above the orders of any Church Court; therefore

Resolved, That the signers of the *Declaration and Testimony* are not slanderers, schismatics, and rebels against ecclesiastical authority, but have simply exercised a great Protestant right, and discharged a solemn duty; and

Resolved, That the Synod, having no evidence that these brethren are not in good and regular standing in their respective Presbyteries and Sessions, cannot, without violating the constitution of the Church, deny them their seats.

This paper was adopted.

Mr. Nicolls and others then quietly withdrew and organized another Synod.

The Committee on the General Assembly made the following report which was adopted:

The Committee on the Minutes of the Assembly would respectfully report, that they have examined the same as carefully as the limited time allowed to them would permit. They find that great matters, vitally affecting the purity of the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church and its principles and forms of government, were entertained and passed upon by the Assembly; and that to many of its acts they are compelled to find that in the very opening of its sessions an order was passed under the se-

vere application of the previous question, unjustly excluding from the body Drs. Stuart Robinson and S. R. Wilson, and the venerable C. A. Wickliffe and Mark Hardin, Commissioners from the Louisville Presbytery; and that the preamble to such order contains the cruel intimation that there was the strongest ground for believing that one of them would have been excluded from the functions of the gospel ministry, if the Presbytery of which he was a member and consistor, had faithfully discharged its duty. That an intimation, so ungenerous, so unchristian and so untrue, should have been entertained, and is spread upon the permanent minutes of the highest court of the Presbyterian Church, a church whose institution guards with jealous care the reputation of all its members, is one of the greatest wonder and the deepest humiliation.

The report of the Special Committee of seven, in the matter of the Presbytery of Louisville, and of the Gurley resolutions, which were subsequently adopted, and the *Declaration and Testimony* to be a slander against the church, self-maintained in its character and aims, and its adoption by a church court an act of rebellion against the authority of the General Assembly, and summoning the signers of the *Declaration and Testimony* to appear before the next Assembly to answer for what they have done in that matter, have been so repeatedly and fully exposed in their unchristian features, and so recently felt in their terrible results, that your committee do not feel called upon to reproduce them. One of the reasons assigned by Dr. Gurley for the adoption of his paper, and ordered by the Assembly to be spread upon their minutes, is that it gives the signers of the *Declaration and Testimony*, time for repentance, and yet without repentance they are still permitted to preach the gospel, and moderate church Sessions. It directs that they shall not be permitted to sit as members of any church court higher than the Session, and yet they were authorized by a formal vote of the Assembly to continue to occupy their seats in that body, the highest court of the church, after the passage of the Gurley paper. Orders so arbitrary, and inconsistent, issuing from no principle, but views of expediency and a determination to retain power, show the urgent necessity of a return to the constitutional provision that process against a gospel minister shall always be instituted in the Presbytery of which he is a member.

Your committee are compelled to express their strongest condemnation of the action of the Assembly in regard to the Walnut Street Church, under the care of the Louisville Presbytery. That action orders that three individuals, D. McNaughton, B. F. Avery and Jas. A. Leach shall be recognized and acknowledged as ruling elders in said church, while "the case" as declared by the protestants to the action "was not before the Assembly either upon complaint, appeal, reference, or review and control—in one or other of which ways only could it be regularly brought under their jurisdiction."

The objections to these different acts of the Assembly have been so clearly and fully embodied in the different protests spread upon the minutes and published in the papers, and so thoroughly discussed, that your committee do not feel it incumbent upon them to dwell upon them now.

The committee find in the minutes of the Assembly, the record of action looking to the union of the Old and New School Presbyterian Churches;—also, action adverse to the union of said Old School Church with the branch of the Presbyterian family organized in the Southern States. The Synod feel called upon to express their deep regret, and their strong disapprobation of the course of the General Assembly in seeming to ignore agreement on fundamental doctrines of faith and church polity as a basis of union, and making similarity of political views, the foundation of ecclesiastical unity.

For the Free Christian Commonwealth.

One effect of the Bible is to educate the human mind and to turn out the highest style of man.

This may seem to have been implied in what we have already said. But we wish here to take a different and varied view of the subject; although the Christian religion is by far the mightiest and most benign of all the powers that operate upon the human mind, yet without high intelligence in its teachers and professors its influence is comparatively small. Religion, without intelligence, is not likely to reach all orders of mind nor to exercise a very predominating power in the world aside from and beyond the power of religion itself. The mind needs the light, the culture, and the energy of enlarged knowledge and the stimulus of quickened thought to work out its greatest and most glorious effects upon human character.

As the sun rises so his light comes with him, and as the Bible appears in a nation, so it carries its own light with it. And as it supplies moral light and fitting stimulus to the soul, it at the same time begets a love of knowledge and supplies the means to that end. It supplies the moral and intellectual elements with which it constructs those great and admirable characters, and lofty specimens of men, who take their breadth of mind, their justice and liberality of sentiment and their noble and generous actions from the mutual operations of religious and general knowledge. The greatest lights in the world have grown great with the Bible in their hands and their knees often bent in prayer before God. The greatest ornaments of the Legal and Medical profession have been men of this order. Hence their strength, their power, and well balanced harmony of life and character. No such men have ever been made or known except the Bible has made them. They grow from

the compound operations of large knowledge and moral force.

The Bible is, not only the source of the greatest and most essential of all knowledge, but it sheds a light upon all other departments and principles of knowledge. It introduces the student into the arena of God's greatest works and most mysterious ways; and marching hand in hand with all human knowledge, it exhibits to the human eye a clearness of vision, and extent of grandeur, of sublimity, of splendor, and variety of objects, far outstripping the possibilities of mere natural philosophy. Taking its stand at the great central throne, it sweeps in vision the vast and wonderful domains of creation, Providence, and Redemption.

It begins with principles clear to reason and natural to the human soul, because it begins with a personal God as the Great First Cause of all things. And not merely as a cold philosophical idea, but as a heavenly father to all his children. This rich and glorious idea of divine personality is the great leading light amid all darkness and perplexity of life. It threads the way amid ten thousand labyrinths. It chases the cold, benumbing shades of pantheism from the earth. It lets the sun of day shine through to animate the efforts and beam the light of intelligence upon all essential subjects. It gives end and aim to human existence, labors, and prospects.

A personal God accounts for our accountability, and assigns reasons and motives for a right and holy character while pantheism mocks at the bare idea.

The Christian mind starting from a point that overlooks immensity, it is neither deceived by the pretensions nor caught in the snares of a bewildering philosophy. Clearly discerning those points where clouds and darkness limit the human view, where perverted learning runs mad, and where men have rushed recklessly into the fogs and quagmires of atheism, it runs no risks of delusion and fears no triumphs of infidel jubilation.

The Bible, therefore, has much to do in guiding the intellect in the paths of science, in holding it steady and true as it climbs upward along the line of immensity, or as it drives its investigations amid the materials of our own sphere.

What therefore can be a greater mistake than to suppose that the Bible has nothing to do in guiding, training, and educating the intellect of man? For what can more eminently enlarge, elevate, sharpen and polish the mind than the great revelations made in the divine word? What is there so high, what is there so profound, what so vast in extent, what so wonderful in power, and what so incomparable in wisdom and knowledge as God himself? The study of him and his works should ever more in parallel lines. This enables the mind, deepens and widens the channels of thought, whets the mental faculties to their keenest edge, brightens and disciplines the soul far beyond any single materiality of study. The subjects of revelation demand the profoundest studies and richly repay the student beyond all other matters of investigation.

There is no subject so profound, so full of illustration and exhaustless in its stores of instruction as Christian Theology. As to the wealth of the mind and as to its effect upon men in keeping them from moral and mental bankruptcy, the Bible is the California and Australia of the human intellect. It abounds in mines of wealth which enriched generations past and will exhaustlessly enrich those that are to come. To the poet and historian, the theologian and philosopher, and to men of all kinds and callings it is alike and infinitely valuable. Hence our English literature is full of the riches and inspiration of the divine word. Let all English poetry be destroyed which has borrowed suggestions, illustrations, and allusions from the Bible, and there will not be much left. It built the stately and ponderous verse of John Milton. Its colorings appear at times even upon the pages of Shakespeare. It breathes like the freshness and fragrance of spring in Cowper, and Byron too gathered his flowers from, and smells of the odors of ancient Palestine.

And what is true of poetry is equally true of prose. It warms and enlightens the morality and goes sounding along in the pages of the Spectator and Rambler. As it infuses justice and generosity into statesmanship, it inflames, adorns, and enriches the eloquence of Burke. It swells the periods and strengthens the proud and lofty sentences of Pitt. It sways the rhetoric and indites the reasonings of Fox. Its life and modes of thought pervade the great mass of the greatest of English works. The whole range of British literature, whether in Europe, Asia, or America, has partaken largely and vitally in the sentiment, morality and other characteristics of the Bible. Nothing has ever stirred the soul to such depths, nor invigorated it so extensively and powerfully with benefits and blessings as that Book.

Look at those countries where it is not the common gift to the people and the general mind is a pool of a thousand years' stagnation. No change and no

upward movement in the masses. Old things do not pass away and all things do not become new. The monotony of thought and life do not change. What an escape from priest and pope to an intelligent worship of God? What an escape from Mount Olympus to Mount Zion—from the rabble deities of Homer and Virgil to the Jehovah of the Bible. What a light is the Bible to scatter the darkness of atheism and to reconcile man to his own existence? However we may justly honor old Greece and Rome for our classic learning and mental discipline, the divinity of the Bible shines out so sublimely grand and so conspicuously clear beyond all that men have praised in Grecian and Roman literature, that any attempt at comparison looks like an attempt at the profane and ludicrous. The one has some brightness and beauty, some sublimity and excellence mixed up with great masses of heathenish superstitions and abominations, while the other shines all over in the light of a literature of unparalleled excellence and at the same time with the spirit of the infinite God. It is but the reflections of his infinite perfections. The very subjects and objects of the Bible make it sublime. Its God is the ever living and true God, and such a God as reason rejoices in and loves to embrace; and that man is the victim of an excess of shallowness and inanity who either denies God altogether, or who receives any other than that of the Bible.

"As Good as a Christian."

"I fear that my husband will stumble into hell over the faults of professing Christians." Such was the remark of a lady whose husband belonged to that large class in every community that lives on the faults and inconsistencies of the children of God. They claim that they are as good as Christians, and look for the Christian's joy in the world to come.

It need not for a moment be denied that Christians have faults, and are not as consistent as they ought to be. Every true believer in Christ will tell you that he is a greater sinner than you think he is. He knows the secret faults of his heart. You only know the inconsistencies of his outward conduct.

And yet there is a heaven-wide difference between the most unworthy child of God and the most moral and upright man who is not a Christian. The one will be saved; the other, unless he is reformed, will be lost. The one has consecrated himself to the service of God, and has the promise of God's strength to help him purify his heart and life. His heavenly Father is working in him day by day the work of sanctification. The other is living without God, living for self, and not simply standing still in his wickedness, but day by day growing worse—hardening himself more and more against God.

The assertion so often made by men of unrenowned hearts, "I am as good as a Christian," is made as an excuse for not becoming a Christian. It is made to cheat the conscience, which is telling all those who make such a boast, "You are not as good as a Christian." Well indeed will it be for those thus deceiving themselves, if they open their eyes to their true state, ere they stumble into hell over the faults of professing Christians.

We attempt not to palliate or excuse these faults. Christians ought to give much less occasion to the world to find fault with them. Every true Christian is seeking just this, that he may so let his light shine that men may take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus.

But every man must give an account of himself to God; and tried by this rule, where do you stand? What if the world were hypocrites, and going down to eternal death, that would not alter your own responsibility to seek the kingdom of heaven, to give your heart to the Saviour, and serve him all your days. If you have been making this miserable excuse for not coming to Christ, I pray you, my dear friend, give it up at once. Let it not longer be said of you, "I fear he will stumble into hell over the faults of professing Christians."

A. O. K.

"Take this Child, and Nurse it for Me."

EXODUS II: 8.

We find in the *Presbyterian*, the following beautiful and instructive incident in the life of an esteemed Christian lady, Mrs. Agnes Carter, the mother of Robert Carter & Brothers, of New York, lately gone to her reward.

"Last autumn an aged Christian, a widow of four-score years, related to me an experience of her early days. The haunts of my childhood had been the haunts of hers. And other sympathies, too, closer than those of country or of kindred, led her to speak freely of what she had seen and felt during a checkered pilgrimage. When she first entered upon her married life, she and her husband could lock the cottage door, and go together, morning and afternoon, to the house of God. After the birth of their first son they had to enjoy this privilege in turn; one going in the forenoon, and the other in the afternoon. But the sickness or fretfulness of the child not unfrequently detained the mother at home during the whole of the Sabbath. This she felt to be a great privation. On one such occasion a neighbor, coming in to inquire about her welfare, found her in tears.

The dejected young mother was already a Christian, she was a lover of the Lord's house, and of the Lord's day; she trusted in Jesus as a Saviour—but she had not yet learned lovingly to accept all his discipline. There were things connected with it "too painful for her." She did not know what was to compensate her for the want of the days in the courts of the Lord: and so she told her neighbor the cause of her de-

jection. "Woman," replied her neighbor, in the broad dialect of that land, "d'ye no mind the word that says, 'Take the child, and nurse him for me; and I will give thee thy wages?' It was a word in season; and with greater or less power, it sustained and comforted that mother during the whole of her subsequent nursing of ten children.

Her home in the valley of the Tweed was long ago exchanged for one on the banks of the Mohawk. But the God whose word thus comforted her in early womanhood is with her still when she is old and gray headed; and she can gratefully speak of her eleven children, "nursed for Him," as all walking in the ways of God on earth, or taken away to another home, into which sickness and death can never come."

For the Children.

An Unexpected Visitor.

"It must be, my child," said the poor widow, wiping away the tears which slowly trickled down her wasted face. "I am too sick to work, and you cannot, surely, see me and your little brother starve. Try and beg a few shillings, and perhaps by the time that is gone I may be better. Go, Henry, my dear, I grieve to send you on such an errand, but it must be done."

The boy, a noble looking little fellow of about ten years, started up, and throwing his arms about his mother's neck, then at another, as they passed by him, but no one seemed to look kindly upon him, and the longer he waited, the faster his courage dwindled away, and the more difficult it became to master resolution to beg.

Everybody seemed in a hurry, and the poor boy was quite in despair, when at last he espied a gentleman who seemed to be very leisurely taking a morning walk. He was dressed in black, wore a three-cornered hat, and had a face that was as mild and benignant as an angel's. Somehow, when Henry looked at him, he felt all his fears vanish at once, and instantly approached him. His tears had been flowing so long, that his eyes were quite swollen and red, and his voice trembled; but that was with weakness, for he had not eaten for twenty-four hours. As Henry, with a low faltering voice, begged for a little charity, the gentleman stopped, and his kind heart melted with compassion as he looked into the fair countenance of the poor boy, and saw the deep blush which spread over his face, and his eyes to the modest, humble tones which accompanied his petition.

"You do not look like a boy that has been accustomed to beg his bread," said he, kindly laying his hand on the boy's shoulder, "what has driven you to this step?"

"Indeed," answered Henry, his tears beginning to flow afresh, "indeed, I was not born in this condition. But the misfortunes of my father and the sickness of my mother have driven me to the necessity now."

"Who is your father?" inquired the gentleman, still more interested.

"My father was a rich merchant of this city, but he became blind, and for a friend, who soon failed, and he was entirely ruined. He could not live long after this loss, and in one month he died of grief, and his death was more dreadful than any of our trouble. My mother, my little brother and myself soon sank into the lowest depths of poverty. My mother has, until now, managed to support herself and my little brother by her labor, and I have earned what I could by shovelling snow, and other work that I could find to do. But night before last my mother was taken very sick, and has since become so much worse that," here the tears flowed faster than ever—"that I fear she will die; I cannot think of any one in the world to help her. I have not hid any work for several weeks."

The tears, and the simple moving language of the poor boy touched a chord in the breast of the stranger that was accustomed to frequent vibrations.

"Where does your mother live, my boy?" said he, in a husky voice. "Is it far from here?"

"She lives in the last house in this street, sir," said Henry. "You can see it from here in the third block, on the left hand side."

"Have you sent for a physician?"

"No, sir," said the boy, sorrowfully shaking his head. "I had no money to pay either for a physician or medicine."

"Here," said the stranger, drawing some pieces of silver from his pocket, "here are three dollars; take them and run immediately for a physician."

Henry's eyes flashed with gratitude; he received the money with a stammering and almost inaudible voice, but with a look of the warmest gratitude, he vanished.

The benevolent stranger instantly sought the dwelling of the sick widow. He entered a little room in which he could see nothing but a few implements of female labor—a mirrorable table, an old bureau, and a little chest which stood in one corner, on which the invalid lay. She appeared weak and almost exhausted, and on the bed at her feet sat a little boy crying as if his heart would break.

Deeply moved at the sight, the stranger drew near the bedside of the invalid, and, feigning to be a physician, inquired into the nature of her disease. The symptoms were explained in a few words, when the widow, with a deep sigh, added, "Oh, my sickness has a deeper cause, and one which is beyond the physician's art to cure. I am a mother. I see my children sinking deeper in want, which I have no means of relieving. My sickness is of the heart, and even death is dreadful to me, for it wakens the thought of the misery into which my children would be plunged, if—"

Here emotions checked her utterance, and the tears flowed unrestrained down

her cheeks. But the pretended physician spoke so consolingly to her, and manifested such warm sympathy for her condition, that the heart of the woman throbbled with an unwonted pleasure. "Do not despair," said the stranger; "think only of recovery and of preserving a life that is so precious to your children. Can I write a prescription here?"

The woman took a little prayer-book from the hands of a child who sat with her on the bed, and tearing out a blank leaf, "I have no other," she said; "perhaps this will do."

The stranger took a pencil from his pocket, and wrote a few lines upon the paper.

"This prescription," said he, "it will find of great service to you. If it is necessary, I will write you a second; I have great hopes of your recovery."

He laid the paper on the table and departed. Scarcely was he gone when the oldest son returned.

"Cheer up, my dear mother," going to her bedside and affectionately kissing her. "See what a kind, benevolent stranger has given us. It will make us rich for several days. It has enabled us to have a physician, and he will be here in a moment. Compose yourself now, dear mother, and take courage."

"Come nearer, my son," answered the mother, looking with pride and affection on her children. "God never forsakes the innocent and good. Oh, may I watch over you in all your paths. A physician has just been here. He was a stranger, but he spoke to me with a compassion and kindness that was a balm to my heart. When he went away, he left this prescription on the table; see if you can read it."

Henry glanced at the paper and started back—he took it up; as he read it through again and again a cry of wonder and astonishment escaped him.

"What is it, my son?" exclaimed the poor widow, trembling with apprehension of she knew not what.

"Ah, read, mother! Go! has heard us."

The mother took the paper from the hands of her son, but no sooner had she fixed her eyes upon it than she exclaimed, "It is Washington," and fell back fainting on her pillow.

The writing was an obligation from Washington—for it was indeed he—by which the widow was to receive one hundred dollars from his own private property, to be doubled in case of necessity.

Meanwhile, the expected physician made his appearance, and soon awoke the mother from her fainting fit. The joyful surprise, together with the good nurse, with which the physician provided her, and a plenty of wholesome food, soon restored her to perfect health.

The influence of Washington, who visited them more than once, provided for the widow friends who furnished her with constant employment, and her sons, when they arrived at a proper age, were placed in respectable situations, which rendered the remainder of their mother's life comfortable and happy.

Let the children who read this story remember, when they think of the great and good Washington, that he was not above entering the dwelling of poverty, and carrying joy and gladness to the hearts of the inmates. This is no fictitious tale, but it is only one of a thousand incidents which might be related of him, and which stamp him one of the best of men.—*Christian Observer*.

English Congregationalists.—The Congregationalists of Great Britain and Ireland have 2,785 churches, 2,307 ministers, and 411 students for the ministry, showing for the year 1855 an increase of 17 churches and 45 ministers, and a decrease of 11 candidates.

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